

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

/064 W

-----083131 061411Z /50

R 060944Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5618

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANJUL 0904

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GA

SUBJECT: BAKAU BYELECTION

1. DOMESTIC POLITICS, VERY QUIET SINCE APRIL 1977 GENERAL ELECTION, HAVE BECOME RECHARGED BECAUSE OF HOTLY CONTESTED BYELECTION IN BANJUL SUBURB OF BAKAU. ELECTION RESULTS FROM TRAGIC DEATH OF BRIGHT, UP AND COMING, YOUNG OPPOSITION M.P. WHO DIED IN AUTOMOBILE CRASH IN LATE MARCH. FORMER M.P., BAKARY CAMARA, HAD HANDILY WON BAKAU FOR SHERIFF DIBBA'S NCP FROM INCUMBENT PPP PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, DURING LAST YEAR'S ELECTORAL EXERCISE.

2. ON MAY 22 TWO CANDIDATES FILED IN BAKAU, FAMARA BOJANG FOR SIR DAWDA'S PPP AND DEMBO BOJANG FOR OPPOSITION NCP. ELECTION WILL TAKE PLACE JUNE 15. PARTY RALLIES, SPEECHES, AND GENERAL ELECTIONEERING HAS PROCEEDED AT FAST PACE DURING RECENT WEEKS. BOTH CANDIDATES COME FROM BOJANG FAMILY, WHICH HAS POWERFUL CHIEFLY CONNECTIONS GOING BACK CENTURIES IN BAKAU AREA. FAMARA BOJANG'S FATHER WAS PPP CHAIRMAN IN BAKAU FOR YEARS. BOTH BOJANGS WERE FRIENDS AND CONTEMPORARIES OF CAMARA.

3. ELECTION IS CURRENTLY RATED A TOSS-UP, WITH NCP GIVEN SLIGHT EDGE TO REPEAT 1977 PERFORMANCE. NCP VICTORY WOULD NOT
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BE TERRIBLY SIGNIFICANT IN NATIONAL TERMS, BUT WOULD SERVE TO SHOW THAT OPPOSITION RETAINS VOTER ALLEGIANCE IN BANJUL SUBURBS, WHERE PARTY WON 2 OF AREA'S 3 SEATS IN 1977 ELECTION. PPP VICTORY, ON OTHER HAND, WOULD BE MAJOR SET BACK TO NCP ASPIRATIONS, SIGNALLING NOTABLE WEAKNESS IN OPPOSITION'S CONTINUED DRAWING POWER.
WYGANT

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